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## **The Right-Way-Up by Kaamokset**

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

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**Summary:** (AU) Guess what? Turns out Hawkins' Lab has a knack for disturbing moral compasses too, Hopper discovers, after he finds a woman in the woods...trapped in a Demogorgon's body - a woman he hoped to God was dead. While Will's 'PTSD' gets worse and worse, Hopper is forced to co-exist with the devil. A shapeshifter AND Brenner's employee? Please, a warm welcome...to Number Fourteen...

# 1. Nightmares

## Notes:

Hi there!

The character of 'Auntie'/'Tina' is based upon the woman I think was called Connie (who was Brenner's second-in-command), so I'll say that she, along with the other characters, don't belong to me. (Phew, that's the disclaimer out of the way.)

Secondly, I've rated this 'teen and upwards' purely for the references to the cold war, which, without a basic knowledge of, the story may not make as much sense. Leading on from that, I'm not trying to be politically offensive, just historically accurate and true to the series. And no, the Russians are NOT meant to be the baddies. (Hi to anyone from Russia, by the way.)

O...kay then. I think that's everything. So, without further ado...

...

## Chapter 1

Hopper turned fitfully.

He was in the middle school. He was running, gun in hand, desperate to protect Eleven, Joyce and the kids.

Then all was chaos.

He saw the Demogorgon advance on El's Papa, then the scene shifted and he watched El's 'Auntie' point a gun at the kids. She's going to shoot them...

...But then the Demogorgon rushes for her and the blonde woman is carried, *screaming*, through the wall to die in the upside-down.

But then El...

El was advancing on the monster, giving all the power she could.

It disintegrated... but took El with it-

Hopper woke with a start, the phone was ringing. Who the hell called at eleven at night on a Friday? He wondered whether there had been a car accident, he assumed it was a police call. That's why he was surprised when he heard Joyce's voice on the phone.

"Er...Hopper," she said, with a note of hysterics. "I know it's late and I'm sorry, but...you...please could you get down here...we...we're having a bit of an emergency."

"Hang tight Joyce," he replied calmly, guessing that this was a Will emergency and so she couldn't speak openly on the phone line. "I'll be right with you."

He walked to where Eleven was sleeping, still in front of the TV. He felt a twinge of guilt and carried her to her bed instead.

"Hey, El?" he said softly, shaking her a little.

She grunted sleepily.

"I just have to go and help Will," he continued. "You stay here and I'll be back soon."

"When?" asked El.

This was always important.

"At the latest, when the big hand points to the twelve and the small hand points to the one, okay, so that's two hours."

"One o'clock?" she asked sleepily and Hopper nodded, proud.

She was learning.

She nodded her agreement to this time and Hopper rushed out of the door.

Joyce practically pounced upon Hopper as he entered the Byers' house. He saw Jonathan, Will's older brother, standing anxiously in the corner of the room next to Will.

"Joyce," Hopper said in his clam baritone. "What happened?"

"It's Will!" she gasped. "He's...he's having some sort of nightmare and we can't wake him up."

As if to demonstrate her point, the boy started whimpering.

Hopper strode over to him.

"Will!" he said loudly, shaking the boy.

"Hopper!" shouted Will.

"Will, yes! It's me! Talk to me buddy what's going on?"

Seemingly in response, Will's eyes snapped open.

"Have to find Hopper!" he panted desperately.

"Will I am right here," said Hopper urgently. "Look at me!"

Joyce was weeping.

"Hopper help me!" shouted Will, writhing. "I'm trapped! I'm trapped!"

Hopper could see how much anguish was in Will's un-seeing eyes. Anguish that shouldn't have been there.

And then as soon as the thrashing started, it stopped again and Will went limp in his mother's arms and started snoring softly in time to his mother's terrified sobs.

Hopper shook him awake.

"Hey bud, it's Hopper. You okay? You were having a bot of a moment there."

Will looked around with alarm.

"M..mom?" he said softly.

"Yes," sobbed Joyce, leaping upon her child. "Yes, I'm here for you honey!"

Hopper got up and turned to Jonathan.

"Hey, c'mere", he said, leading the teen out of the room. "So Jonathan, how long's this been going on for tonight?"

"Er...it started..." began Jonathan shakily. "...Must have been about three minutes before mom called you. He was fine before bed then we...we heard all this shouting. At...at first it wasn't distinct but after about fifteen minutes he suddenly shouted "Hopper's car" and ... "He knows," and stuff like that. It...it hasn't happened before, not like that I mean."

Hopper put his hand to his forehead to think.

"It could have been a flashback," he reasoned. "I'm sure something in the autumn would have matched up to that."

Jonathan shook his head.

"No!" he said earnestly. "He *knew* where you were, he shouted out when you turned not the driveway, before any of us heard the car. He was...he was somewhere else."

Hopper considered this. Gah...Goddamn it!

"Kay," sighed the Chief. "It seems to have stopped now but keep an eye on him. Maybe he could sleep in your room tonight or something."

Jonathan nodded, still spooked.

"Just watch that kid," said Hopper gravely, jabbing his finger in Will's direction. "I'm serious. I don't think his diagnosis is completely accurate."

## 2. The Truce

### Chapter 2

As Hopper was driving back to the cabin in the woods, he was agitated. He was thinking about Will, and Joyce. It was very clear now that they were still in deep shit.

So... the doctors said the Will had *PTSD* but that didn't...somehow that just didn't sound right to Hopper. Sure, it was the most *logical* explanation, but when Will went missing, the logical explanation for Joyce's madness was grief but she had been right. This was the same. These days the strangest explanation for things usually turned out to be right what *was* logical about any of this?

Hopper was so absorbed in his thoughts that we was totally unprepared as an animal darted across the road. It was *big*. It almost looked like a...

"Holy shit!" shouted Hopper.

Now that was the Demogorgon. One hundred percent. He wasn't just imagining it. He pulled the truck over sharply.

Shit. He was alone and he knew it wasn't sensible to go after it but it was heading towards town, god only knows...

Decision made, Hopper loaded his gun and raced out of the vehicle.

"Where are you..." he muttered as he charged through the forest. "Where are you you son of a bitch. You're meant to be dead."

He wound up in a clearing and jumped out of his skin when he heard a bird fly out of the trees nearby. It was here.

He saw it. The Demogorgon. And it saw him.

Hopper held his gun ready, aiming at the beast, ready to put a bullet in it when it lunged to attack but then the Demogorgon did something strange. It slowly backed away from Hopper and held it's long arms up in...surrender?

Hopper held his gun steady nonetheless. He doubted the Demogorgon sign language was the same as humans'. He had no idea what it was doing.

A strange kind of standoff ensued. Hopper could shoot, but the monster could lunge. For some reason Hopper could tell that the beast could sense he had a weapon. How intelligent were these things anyway? Hopper stared at the thing and got a proper look at every inch of it's hideousness, the hideousness that walked forwards very slowly and then got down on it's knees.

"The hell?" gasped Hopper, what was it *doing*?

Then, the beast held up two of it's...digits (you couldn't really call them fingers) towards Hopper, palm first. There was no mistaking that one.

"Peace," breathed Hopper. "Holy... *shit*."

The beast...*nodded*?

"What, you understand me?" shuddered Hopper, in shock.

Hopper got a nod.

"O-okay," he said shakily. "Do you...are you trying to communicate with me? Is this what this is about?"

Again, it nodded.

"Did you take those people?" Hopper asked, he had to know if this monster was aware of what it had done.

It shook it's head and gestured vaguely to the space beside it.

"Others? Others did?"

The monster gave him a thumbs up. True.

"But you didn't?" asked Hopper, wondering suddenly if the beast was advanced enough to lie.



It shook it's head. Negative. Then it reached, almost imploringly to Hopper. He'd never seen an animal do something like that. God, it just seemed so...

"Were you...were you human once?" he asked breathily, struck suddenly by a horrible inspiration.

It nodded.

"Okay," said Hopper, trying not to freak out. "So were you a man or a woman?"

The Demogorgon cupped it's hands under it's chest. Woman.

"Are you...stuck like this?" Hopper queried, thinking to was better just to go along with it.

It nodded and then slumped on the floor with it's grisly head in it's hands.

"Hey," cried Hopper. "It's okay. We'll...we'll figure this out. How'd it happen?"

The monster pointed through the trees and with a jolt, Hopper thought something else was there but no, it was pointing to something else.

"I don't..."

The monster shook it's head and waved it's hands, okay, that was a long shot, try again.

It mimed...holding something and then moving it's hand towards it Like...pouring.

"At...at the bar?" Hopper asked.

The monsters hands flopped to it's side. Hopper imagined the woman in there giving him a withering look. No, of course this didn't happen at the goddamn *bar*.

"Okay, dumb guess," allowed Hopper, his bad.

The monster mimed something else, typing on a keyboard...or playing the piano, Hopper couldn't tell. Then it threw its arms out wide and drew the biggest box it could and pretended to shield its eyes (if it had had any) from the sun as it looked up.

"Big..." said Hopper.

The monster nodded then jabbed its arm impatiently through the trees again, away from town.

"A big thing that way," said Hopper excitedly, the truth dawning. "Hawkins lab!"

The monster nodded furiously.

"Holy shit!" spluttered Hopper. "The *lab* did this to you?"

Hopper wasn't exactly surprised but he was still disgusted. He was most definitely on the monster's side.

Then, the Demogorgon started gesturing furiously with its hands.

"I don't know what you mean!" cried Hopper in frustration.

It really was difficult to read someone's expression if they didn't have a face.

The Demogorgon shook its head and slapped its appendage to where its forehead should have been. Hopper almost smiled at how human the gesture was.

The creature held out its hands. Okay. Try again.

It gestured to Hopper, then to its head, then to itself.

"I..I understand you?" offered Hopper.

It shook its head. No, that wasn't it.

"Er...okay, I...get in your head?" he tried.

Again no joy.

The creature pointed to it's head again. This was the word that Hopper kept getting wrong.

"Kay, so 'I' and 'you' are correct," he said, inclining his head to ask the question.

The Demagorgon nodded.

Hopper thought for a moment.

"I...see you?" he asked tentatively. "No. I...*remember* you. No. I...*know* you? I...*bel-*"

The monster clapped it's hands triumphantly.

"Oh, I got it?" asked Hopper, disbelievingly. "I *know* you?"

The beast nodded.

A strange feeling crept over Hopper. The beast had sought him out, a miracle. It was a female. Was it...?...No, it couldn't be...his...his daughter?

"Oh my God..." he choked. "What's your name?"

The creature writhed in frustration. How the hell was she supposed to mime that?

"Okay," said Hopper, as calmly as he could. "Maybe you could write out what you mean."

The Demogorgon gestured around, rather sarcastically. With *what*?

"Could you write?" asked Hopper, seized with new enthusiasm. "Would that be possible?"

The monster wobbled it's head back and fourth. Maybe. Worth a go.

"Okay then," said Hopper. How about I meet you here tomorrow night? Same time...if I can find the place again."

The monster nodded enthusiastically, then dropped to the floor and mimed warming it's hands against a camp fire.

"You'll make a fire?" he asked, more confidently now.

It nodded and gave him a thumbs up, pleased he had been so quick on the uptake.

"That's a great idea!" he said. "Kay, I'll give you my lighter. Now you keep that safe, okay, I don't want a forest fire."

It nodded and held it to its chest. I'll cherish it.

Hopper smiled.

"Okay, tomorrow, same time, you light a fire. And I may bring someone else with me but they're nothing to worry about, they won't hurt you, but we're gonna have to bring weapons with us just to make sure."

It nodded agreement. It understood that might be necessary.

"Okay," breathed hopper, holding his hand out. "Shake on it."

Tentatively, the monster wound its clammy appendage around Hopper's hand.

"Good," he said. "Just hold tight, we're going to help you."

It put its hands over the place where a human heart would have been. Thank you.

"Bye", called Hopper retreating into the trees, watching the beast wave, quite forlornly, after him in receipt.

### 3. The Code

#### Chapter 3

At first light, Hopper made the call.

"Hey Joyce, it's Andy."

"Andy?" she repeated.

He could hear the rustling as she fetched the book she'd need for this call. 'Andy' always spoke in code.

"Yeah," said Hopper. "I know it's early, but I was wondering if you wanted to go fishing today?"

*Get your ass down here.*

"I'm thinking of going out to the creek,"

*I'm at the cabin.*

"The weather forecast is looking nice"

*Something big is going down.*

"Oh, right, well I'm free I guess," said Joyce in her warbly voice, which under the pressure had got even more frantic than normal.

"That's great," continued Hopper, sounding natural. "Maybe you could bring a picnic?"

*Don't bring the kids.*

"Er..." said Joyce, leafing through the book again. "What would you like in the picnic?"

*What should I bring with me?*

"You know, I'd just love some potato chips," replied Hopper.

*Shotgun, loaded.*

"Er...great!" squeaked Joyce. "What time should I get there?"

"How about...12:30?" Hopper offered, clearly very excited about fishing.

*Nightfall.*

"That sounds great!" breathed Joyce. "See you soon!"

"You too!"

Hopper hung up. Now all he could do was wait...and try to drag Eleven away from the TV for five minutes.

"Hey El," he called. "There's something I wanna talk to you about. C'mere."

Reluctantly, El padded into the kitchen, as usual barefoot. She didn't really trust shoes.

"So...El," he began gingerly. "Last night..."

"Where were you last night?" she asked sharply. "You were late."

"Yeah," said Hopper. "Well that's the thing. Because I had to go check something out. Now, I hate to talk about this El, but when you were in the upside down...did you ever see more than one Demogorgon?"

El looked distant, then...

"No. Why?"

"Because I saw one last night," said Hopper seriously. "And it...communicated with me. It told me it used to be a human woman."

Eleven looked shocked.

"Talked?" she asked.

"No, we ... played a kind of charades. That's like a kind of guessing game," he added quickly, seeing the question on it's way.

Sometimes he forgot how little El actually knew...about anything.

"Now El, this lady's in trouble, okay," said Hopper. "She said that she was at the lab, just like you so I was thinking about letting her stay here while Joyce and I figure something out. So she'll be a Demogorgon in this house. How...do you feel about that?"

"Lab," she said quietly. "Bad."

"Yeah, I know," murmured Hopper. "And that's why we're gonna help her, okay. She's like you. They hurt her."

El shivered.

"Bad men," she whispered. "Papa. Auntie."

"Yeah, well they're gone now so it's okay," reassured Hopper.

El nodded. Papa and Auntie were gone.

"She can stay," she said simply.

Hopper sighed with relief.

"Thank you El. That's going to mean an awful lot to her. Now, while Joyce and I go and get her. Can I ask you a favour."

El nodded.

"I'd like you to clean out the spare bedroom a little, as somewhere for her to stay, could you do that?"

El looked cheered. She *did* want to help the lab monster.

"Okay El," announced Hopper. "So when Joyce arrives, we're going to take the truck and get the Demogorgon."

"Demi," said El.

She liked thinking up names. She was still overjoyed that she'd got her own.

Hopper smiled.

"Okay, *Demi*. And when we bring her back, she'd gonna look like the

monster, but she won't hurt you, no matter how scary she seems, okay? I won't let anything hurt you."

El nodded.

"Okay," she whispered.

"Good," said Hopper. "Now, how about some pancakes while we wait?"



## 4. Auntie

### Notes:

July?

*July*, are you shitting me?

That's ages away!

Seriously, I am *so* excited for season three, I can't even tell you.

I'm so excited, in fact, that I've managed to upload another chapter. I hope you enjoy it!

### Chapter 4

"Oh dear *God*," gasped Joyce.

"Yeah," said Hopper darkly, playing with the catch on his gun. "I know."

"But," spluttered Joyce. "How-how do you know? You spoke to-"

"Joyce!" said Hopper. "We shook on it. There is a *human being* in there. She said she knows me."

Hopper didn't share with Joyce his hopes for Demi's real identity.

Joyce slumped down on the sofa.

"Ice-cream?" offered Eleven kindly, holding out her heaped spoon to Joyce.

"No thank you honey," she replied weakly.

El shrugged. Suit yourself.

"Look," sighed Hopper. "You don't have to come if you don't want to, I just *need* to understand what the hell is going on. I'll bring a pen and some paper and I'll see if she write...or even draw what happened to her."

Joyce looked upset.

"Hopper...but, but what if it was another kid? And what if we can't fix her?"

Hopper grunted determinedly.

"We'll fix her," he said with a nod. "We will. If she can be turned into a monster she can be turned back."

After having armed El with a dustpan and brush, Hopper and Joyce drove in silence to the spot where Demi had run across the road. Hopper pulled up in the place where he could still see his skidded tire tracks from the previous night. There was a plume of smoke above the trees. So far so good.

"Kay," said Hopper. "Here we go".

Bravely, and clutching their guns, Hopper and Joyce ventured into the woods, towards the smell of smoke.

Hopper could hear Joyce's hitched breathing. She was understandably very afraid, and so should he have been except...for some reason he trusted the monster. He felt a connection. She had found him. And there was a possibility...she *could* be...

"Stay behind me," mumbled Hopper as they neared the clearing and Joyce gratefully obeyed.

He stepped through the tree line, cautiously not to scare Demi.

Though a small fire was burning, no-one was there.

"Wha...?" whispered Joyce.

Hopper shushed her.

"Hey," he called gently. "If you're there, it's just me. We brought guns like I said but we don't want to hurt you."

Nothing.

"This here's my friend Joyce. We're going to help you," said Hopper clearly. "We brought some paper so you could dry and write stuff down."

Hopper's suspicions were aroused.

"Joyce," he hissed. "Something's not right. She left."

He looked around the clearing. He saw the lighter on the ground.

"She just left this," he said, weighing the object in his palm. "Why?"

"Hey...Hop?" said Joyce. "Did you notice that yesterday?"

She pointed to something carved into the bark of one of the trees.

Hopper walked towards it, aiming his flashlight beam at it. On the tree was one hastily, and very messily scribbled word:

**RUN**

They heard the helicopter.

"It's a trap!" cried Joyce.

"Shit!" cried Hopper. "No it's not! The must have seen the smoke!"

He thrust his flashlight at Joyce and began clawing at the earth.

"Quick, help me put this out! Use damp soil."

With the thrum of the incoming threat in their ears, they smothered the fire and the two of them dashed for cover.

Joyce buried her head in Hoppers chest as the helicopter...passed over them.

"Huh?" asked Joyce breathlessly. "Where's it going?"

As if in answer, they both heard a roar of agony from the old junk yard where Will and his friends liked to hang out.

"Demi!" shouted Hopper, charging towards the sound.

"Hopper, wait!" cried Joyce, crashing through the undergrowth behind them.

They reached the railroad and ran along it until they come to a point where they could see what was going on. Hopper wished he didn't have to. The helicopter had the Demogorgon caught in it's searchlight and it had opened fire. The Demogorgon roared in pain but didn't go down. Time for round two. A barrel of burning tar was dropped onto the monster along with a missile. There was the thud of an explosion.

Hopper's shouted "no!" was lost in the roar of flames.

Satisfied, the helicopter flew away.

"Shit, *shit!*" shouted Hopper as he raced towards the new crater in the junk yard.

"Wait, you don't know it's dead!" cried Joyce frantically. "And what if it's not the right one?"

However as they got closer, there could be no doubt that this was the right one. Where there should have been a smouldering Demogorgon body, there was instead the naked body of a woman, a woman, in fact, that they *did* indeed know.

"Is that...?" began Joyce shakily, aiming the flashlight beam as what *should* have been a pile of ashes..

"Auntie'," said Hopper hollowly.

They could hear the roar of engines and searchlights in the woods, Hawkins lab wanted it's creation back. Without really thinking, Hopper took off his jacket and wrapped it around the unconscious woman, lifting her into his arms.

"Hopper! Leave her! She's one of them anyway!" cried Joyce wildly. "Let's just *go!*"

"They are *going* to kill her!" accentuated Hopper slowly. "I am not going to *leave her!*"

He said he'd help her. They shook on it.

"Hopper!" screeched Joyce.

Hopper staggered into the darkness with Joyce at his heels. They got back into the woods and out of sight just as the search party broke the tree cover at the other side of the junk yard.

After what seemed like an age of searching, without flashlights so they weren't seen, Joyce and Hopper launched themselves, shaking, into the truck.

## 5. Fourteen

### Chapter 5

Dawn was just breaking.

Hopper sat in the chair in the spare room with his shoulders on his knees and his hand over his mouth, thinking. He gazed at the still-unconscious woman. Someone who, in his opinion, represented the very worst of humanity.

He honestly wanted the Demogorgon version back. The monster had just turned into an even worse one.

Though he knew his hopes had been foolish, it felt like a fist in the gut that it wasn't Sarah. He was angry with himself. Of course it wasn't Sarah! Sarah was...

He had just felt so...*close* to the monster.

The monster, indeed. This woman was responsible, to what extent he didn't know, for El's...*unspeakably* traumatic childhood. She's here so we get some answers, finally, he told himself.

"Bad!" Eleven had screeched madly when they had carried her inside. "Bad!"

El had recognised her too. The argument 'maybe they just look similar' had died in Hopper's mouth upon seeing how sure El was, and how she had screamed before Joyce gently led her, sobbing, away for candy while Hopper dealt with the offending article.

In the weak light of the June morning, Hopper stared at the woman. She looked starved and she smelled *awful*. She smelled like the upside down.

"Hopper," said Joyce, slightly hysterically, entering the lightening room with El holding her hand. "Hopper, we *need* answers."

While Auntie had been unconscious since they arrived back to the cabin, none of the other three had had a wink of sleep between them.

"Alright," said Hopper. "Calm down, I need to think."

"Bad," said El, and drew her finger across her neck, pointing to the woman.

"She-she *helped* them!" hissed Joyce. "She would have let Will *die*, my son. She put that..."

Joyce gestured wildly.

"...Fake body in the quarry! She-she *tortured* you! She would have killed us both, and Eleven, and the other kids, without *blinking!*"

Strangely, Hopper was angry that Joyce had said this.

"Joyce, I'm sorry about what happened to Will," he said, perhaps more sharply than he should have done. "He was in the upside-down for a week. It was awful. I know. But she was stuck as one of those... things and then she got napalmed so just cut her a little slack."

"Hey El, honey," said Joyce angrily, wanting a few minutes with Hopper.

Alone.

"Why don't you get something for this woman to eat?"

"She likes Eggos?" asked Eleven, pleased to note that the woman looked in fairly bad shape.

She glared at the unconscious figure with contempt.

"Or more like salad?" she continued darkly.

Bad people often liked salad.

Hopper sighed heavily.

"I'm sure she'd be thrilled with anything that's not raw meat," he said wearily.

Eleven retreated, plotting revenge.

"What were you thinking?" hissed Joyce. "Bringing her back here? With *Eleven*? She'll tell the *lab*!"

"No, she can't," retorted Hopper. "She'll have to tell them *how* she knows, and then *she'll* be the one in that fucking water tank!"

"So, she's like Eleven then?"

"Well, she's certainly not like us, that's for sure!" Hopper almost shouted.

Joyce looked hurt, and so with a sigh, Hopper continued more calmly.

"Joyce, I think she'd prefer if you did this, but can you look for any tattoos, numbers on her wrist or ankle, or the back of her neck."

Joyce cringed. She didn't want to touch the woman, she was tinged with the upside-down and murder.

"Here," she said after rather tentative search. "Behind her ear."

"Number?" requested Hopper.

"Er, 014," quavered Joyce.

"Fourteen. So she's fourteen then," said Hopper, not quite sure what to be more horrified about. "Great."

"But...she can't have been from *this* lab..." said Joyce. "It...it must have been... *another* one?"

"Yeah," said Hopper, confused. "And why the hell would she experiment on kids if the same thing had happened to her?"

They looked at each other. They seriously had no idea.

At that moment, the woman gave a moan. Hopper slid out his gun.

"Joyce, keep back, I think she's waking up."

Auntie rolled over. Her eyelids fluttered...then opened a little.



She saw the two people gazing at her with disgust.

"Where I am?" she croaked.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you that," said Hopper.

"Who..." she narrowed her eyes.

They were having trouble with the brightening sunlight in the room.

"Ch-chief Hopper?" she asked quietly.

Hopper nodded.

"And Chief Hopper doesn't mind blowing the brains out of a woman who's technically been dead for six months so..."

He drew up a chair.

"You better start talking. First question, what the hell happened to you?"

Auntie took a deep, juddering breath.

"At the school...the thing...it *grabbed* me. It took me through the wall..."

She wrapped her starved arms around herself.

"It took me..." she whispered. "Into the other dimension. It *left* me there."

Hopper and Joyce looked at each other. Jesus Christ!

"I knew I needed to get out," gulped Auntie. "But I couldn't and the things...they were all around. I knew the atmosphere was toxic to humans so I tried...I tried the only thing I could think of and I changed myself into one of the monsters."

Hopper understood why Auntie may have been of scientific value.

Shapeshifter. Hot *damn*.

"And it worked," she said, eyes unseeing. "The others couldn't tell I was different and I was able to live..."

She shivered.

"But...I needed to get out so I tried and tried and a few days ago I manage to rip a tree and walked through it. I tried to turn myself back but...I...I couldn't do it. So I tried again but the sunlight burned."

She took a shuddering breath.

"And...and I was all alone. But then I saw you drive past. And on the way back I stopped you, because you would know..."

Hopped and Joyce shared another look. Despite their mistrust of the woman, they didn't think she was lying.

"So..." said Hopper slowly. "You were in the upside down for six *months*?"

He and Joyce had gone there oh so briefly during there search for Will. It was something that Hopper would never forget and he would, without hesitation, accept death over what this woman had lived through.

She nodded.

"Or thereabouts, judging by the leaves...unless it's been a year and a half..."

Auntie laughed humourlessly.

"I don't know."

Hopper let out a breath. He was finding it hard to keep up his tough interrogator persona with this woman.

"Okay," he asked, unintentionally gently. "But what about the tattoo? Why are you fourteen?"

She gave a mirthless rasping laugh.

"Why is Eleven 'Eleven'? It means thirteen kids died before I did."

Hopper's stomach clenched. It was Joyce who went in heavy.

"But Eleven is 'Eleven' because of *you*," she hissed passionately. "She should have been...a normal little girl with a normal life but you would take it all away."

Auntie looked at the two of them. She reminded Hopper of Eleven. She had the same pain behind her eyes.

The emotional pain however quickly became physical pain as a kitchen knife flew through the air and embedded itself in Auntie's arm. She yelped in pain.

"El!" roared Hopper. "Stop!"

"Bad!" screeched El, watching the blood ooze from the puncture with a kind of savage victory.

Hopper wrestled El back.

"Here honey!" said Joyce and stood in front of El.

Hopper gingerly pulled the knife out of the woman.

"Here", he said, handing her a towel. "Put some pressure on..."

But the wound had already healed. Eleven looked at her in alarm.

"Eleven," said Hopper carefully. "This is Fourteen."

El looked with that emotionless but extremely focused look of hers. She was fascinated. Her eyebrows shot upwards into her brown curls in sudden recognition of a fellow lab-rat.

"Tina," said El proudly.

Hopper and Joyce raised their eyebrows at her.

"Eleven, El," she said slowly, as if Hopper was very slow on the uptake, pointing to herself.

She pointed at the woman.

"Fourteen, Tina,"

"O-okay?" said Hopper, just daring to hope that Eleven wouldn't attack her again.

"So, this is Tina. Tina...this is El."

Tina just looked at her.

What the hell could she say?

The two of them looked at each other with mistrust.

El's jaw tightened. She called the shots now. The echoed the words she heard so often from Auntie's mouth.

"Lock her up."

## 6. An Invitation

### Chapter 6

El could hear Joyce and Hopper talking in the room where Tina was. She walked in to find the woman unconscious again.

"Well? What do we do?" cried Joyce.

"Just..." said Hopper, scrunching up his face in impatience. "Just give it a minute okay? She's been through an ordeal, let her sleep it off."

Joyce mouthed wordlessly.

"Sh-*she's* been through an ordeal? My *son*..."

El looked at Auntie's face as the two adults continued to bicker. She was unconscious, yes but her face was not peaceful. El knew where the woman was. She was not sleeping. And something told El that Auntie wanted El to follow her.

El went to her own room and put on the blindfold she used to go to the dark place.

She opened her eyes. A little girl in grey overalls was playing with some building blocks with a young boy. Suddenly the girl vanished to be replaced by the boy's twin. Then the girl was back. There was someone standing behind El.

"That's you?" she asked Tina.

"Yes," replied the woman emotionlessly.

"Pretty," said El absently.

Tina smiled ruefully.

"Occasionally."

El reached out haltingly and gestured for Tina to follow her into the into a different part of the darkness. Here was a young El, and a

younger Tina, and Papa. This was the first time El ever saw Tina.

Little El was strapped to a bench with a huge writhing spider secured on a rope about a metre above her face. El was crying. She couldn't have been ten years old yet.

"Now Eleven," said Tina. "Your Papa and I would like you to move this spider away from you."

El was whimpering. She didn't look capable of anything.

"Are you scared of the spider?" asked Tina.

"Y-yes," said El, shaking.

"Well I suppose that's understandable," said Tina. "They bite."

El looked in horror at it's wriggling legs and beady red eyes.

"No!" she cried desperately. "Please! Papa! *Please!*"

"Your Papa doesn't want it to hurt you," said Tina calmly. "That's why you are allowed to catch it when we drop it. Would you like to be allowed to do that?"

Eleven sobbed.

"Eleven, concentrate," said Tina coldly.

She let the child writhe a little more before she continued.

"Now, this spider has come a long way to be here today. All the way from Australia can you imagine! And she's just dying to meet you. I wonder where she would like to go first? In your ears? In your nose? Or maybe she'll wriggle into your mouth and crawl into your stomach and lay her eggs."

"Get it AWAY!" screamed El.

"You can do that Eleven, if you try," said Tina. "Will you try?"

El was crying.

"Okay Eleven," said Tina, unmoved. "I'm going to count to three, and right after I've said three, the spider will drop. Catch it. One. Two. Three."

El watched the writhing black shape grow larger, for a fraction of a second before it soured away and splattered to it's death against the glass of the window.

Blood poured from El's nose but she didn't care. She cried with relief. She'd make things fly any distance to make sure that...*spider* creature, never came near her again.

Behind the mirror Papa smiled in wonder, approaching the glass with both hands outstretched as if it really were his new born child that lay behind the glass. He turned to the new supervisor, she had been the one to finally get the girl to do it - this had been her idea.

"Consider yourself hired," he said. "Welcome to the team..."

He looked at El in consideration and then back to the CIA woman.

"...Auntie."

El looked at he present-day Tina who watched the scene with a kind of fascinated horror.

"Spider," said El. "Rat. Bird. Ants. You did it."

Tina didn't say anything.

"Bad," said El. "Worse than him."

She pointed back to where a man in a lab coat was approaching the young Tina, little *vierzehn*.

"Yes," said Tina hoarsely in an extremely El-ish way. "Bad."

As El dissolved from the Dark, leaving Tina all alone she saw something strange...a pool of water?

She wondered about it for only a moment before she was back in her room.

## 7. Friends Don't Lie

### Notes:

Thank you to anyone still reading, and most especially candy95, my sole, but faithful, reviewer. :)

### Chapter 7

"*Goddamn it!*" shouted Hopper from the room.

El jumped - she had been asleep in the living room. Guess he didn't wake her up on his way in.

Eleven heard Tina say something back.

She'd been locked in the spare room for a week now and she and Hopper had quite the rapport going.

"Hey, El?" Hopper shouted. "Could you fetch me the spare key? I dropped the other one down the side of damn radiator, now the maniac's gonna get out."

Tina said something else, it sounded fairly scathing.

El went to seek out this key, but she couldn't find it.

"Kitchen?" she asked.

"Yeah...aw shit. Yeah, I think so I don't really remember..."

El found the key and walked back to where Hopper's hand was flapping hopefully in the space under the door. She sent it zooming into his hand.

"Thanks Kiddo," he said gratefully.

El padded into the living room and shortly Hopper joined her, in his uniform.

"Hey, El, there's something I gotta take care of at the station so how



about you go on a walk until I get back? I think there's some strawberries out in the woods. But don't go too far, okay?"

He looked at El sternly.

"Okay?"

"Okay," whispered El.

"Now Tina's locked up and I gave her her lunch so don't worry about her."

Hopper looked very weary all of a sudden.

"Hopper," said El in her most serious voice. "Tina is bad. She hurt me."

Hopper's face crumbled.

"El, and she hurt others in just the same way. But she is sorry. She is...she's so sorry about all of it. But don't worry, she'll be out of your hair soon. You'll get the justice you deserve."

El considered Hopper.

"You're going to kill her?"

"Yes," said Hopper. "I am. Now, how about that walk?"

When Hopper got home from the station, he was met by El.

"Hey Kiddo," he said. "How's it going?"

El shrugged.

"Off to get strawberries," she informed him.

"Alright then," he said. "But remember we're not..."

"Stupid," she said, not missing a beat.

"Kay then," he grinned. "Be back soon."

Eleven didn't leave immediately.

"Hopper," she whispered.

"Yeah," he said, surprised at her tone.

"Thanks," she sniffed. "For looking after me. I...I love you."

"Whoa there El, It's okay," Hopper said, shocked but pleased.

He went to give her a hug but she pulled away.

"I'm going to go now," she whispered, eyes huge.

"As long as...as long as you feel okay," frowned Hopper as he scrutinised the kid.

She nodded.

"Goodbye Hopper," she whispered.

Hopper was a little worried about El as he watched her walk away, so it was relief that he saw her wander back a few minutes later with a basket full of strawberries.

"Hey, that was quick!" he said, impressed.

El just looked at him blankly.

"Enough time," she said plainly.

She went to turn on the television.

She was certainly in a different mood. Hopper looked at her suspiciously.

"Would you like some cream on them?" he asked hopefully.

"Yes," she said, not one for wasting words.

Hopper went into the kitchen and saw that the draw was open.

"Hey El, did you mess around in the kitchen?" he called.

"Was getting your key," she said distractedly.

"My...whoa...hold it!" Hopper said, bursting back into the living room. "My key? To *Tina's* room?."

El nodded.

"Why the hell did you do that?" he asked, angry.

El shrugged.

"You told me to," she said.

"Wait, *I* told..." he trailed off, stomach plummeting. "Oh *shit!*"

Hopper sprinted down the hallway to Tina's room.

"Tina," he called.

No answer.

*"Tina!"*

He unlocked the door frantically and burst into the room. It was empty.

"Oh son of a *bitch!*"

He dashed into the living room.

"El, we have to get in the car. Now," he panted. "Tina's gone."

El's eyes widened.

"Gone?" she asked.

"Yes! She must have..."

He remembered the El of ten minutes ago who, now he thought about it, was dressed ever so slightly differently.

"Shit! She pretended to be each of us in turn. I forgot she was a *goddamn shape-shifter!*"

Hopper smacked the wall with his fist in frustration.

"She tricked us!" he shouted, furious at the betrayal.

They were going to have to prepare to leave. For good.

They leapt in the car after packing the minimum of essentials.

"Okay, so she's on foot and she won't have got more than fifteen minutes on us," muttered Hopper, more to himself than El. "Shit, I can't believe I trusted her! Joyce was right, she's off to sell us out to the lab."

El was agitated. She was a friend. Friends don't lie. She had lied.

But wait, *had* she? What had she *actually* said in Hopper's body.

"Hopper!" said El urgently as they sped down the road.

She remembered what she had seen for the merest of seconds in the dark place.

"Wrong way!"

"No, we have to get to the lab to head her off..." said Hopper impatiently. "Unless she can get to a phone in which case we're screwed anyway."

"No Hopper, *quarry*," said El insistently.

"El!" he shouted. "This is not the time!"

El wrenched the steering wheel with her mind, spinning the car around.

"Eleven Hopper, what have I told you! That is *dangerous*! Someone could have *died*!"

"Someone is going to die!" cried El. "Quarry! Hurry!"

Hopper began, with a kind of numbness, to understand what was going on. Though he hadn't realised it, Tina had given him a goodbye. And a proper one.

## 8. The Fall

### Chapter 8

Tina stood at the edge. The very edge. Close enough that no one would otherwise stand for fear of falling off. But this time, that was the point.

Tina felt a kind of dull horror. She knew what she had done. Bad things. She had hurt people but still, she couldn't quite bring herself to regret it, and therein lay the problem, because there was actually something *fundamentally* wrong with her. But she'd always known that. Now it was time to do something about it, end it so she wouldn't hurt anyone else.

She shifted her weight, trembling. She ought to jump now, before she could change her mind but once she did, there was no going back. Nobody would survive a fall from that height, not even her, as long as she died instantly. She shuddered. Her body wasn't as ready for this as her mind was, but she had to. It was the only way.

In a sense it was cowardice. She couldn't bear to be poked and prodded the way she had done to other people, children. She was not going back to that lab. And she was *not* going back to the upside-down.

She jumped.

The fall she made wasn't long enough. Halfway to her death, she felt herself jerked upwards by an invisible force. She was slammed onto her back and she skidded painfully through the dust. She was dazed, but through the daze came the familiar face of Subject Eleven.

The girl twitched her hand and Tina's head smacked into the dirt. She saw stars.

"Bad," snarled the girl.

Tina felt her throat constricting of its own accord as Eleven squeezed her hand tighter.

"You don't do that! You are Hopper's Friend. Hopper *needs* Tina!" said El, uncannily observant.

The pressure released.

"Just do it," rasped Tina.

Yes, this was always how it was going to end.

"It's what you *need* to do," she continued passionately. "It will free you. Free the both of us."

"But not the three of us," said a deep voice disapprovingly as Tina was losing consciousness.

She had just enough strength to feel her body being lifted into a pair of strong arms before the blackness closed in.

## 9. Promise

### Notes:

Hello! Double-update today seeing as the previous chapter was so short.

Hope you're enjoying the story!

### Chapter 9

"Tina...Tina, I know you can hear me. We going to play sleeping lions all day?"

Her head felt fuzzy ad her eyesight was blurred when Tina opened her eyes.

"Hopper?" she asked. "Am I...dead?"

"No," he said sharply. "But it was a damn close thing."

With a face like thunder, he strode forwards and seized Tina by the shoulders, jolting her back to reality.

"Don't you *ever* pull something like that again!"

Tina started to cry.

"Hopper," she gasped. "I...I can't..."

"Shhhh," said Hopper, gently coming to kneel beside the bed he'd tucked her up in. "It's okay. I'm not angry at you I just... *Jesus* Tina!"

He rubbed has hand over his face.

"Right, do you still feel like you want to jump?" he asked seriously.

She nodded.

"I....I don't deserve to liv-"

"Hey, I'm not going to let you say that," he interjected. "That's not

true. You...did whatever you did, and then you paid for it. End of. You're...shall we say "the Right-Way-Up."

He smiled at his own joke.

"Hopper," she whispered. "I've tried everything else. Sleeping pills, cutting, I even put a bullet in my head but nothing works. I can't...I'm trapped."

I'm trapped. That was what Will had said. Will had *known* she was coming. Now, how in the *hell* had he known that?

"Look," said Hopper. "I know you're unhappy. I get that. But if you stick around for a little longer you'll be improving *my* quality of life. I really really like you, okay, and I'm not the kind of guy who says that lightly, trust me."

Tina looked quite seriously confused.

He *liked* her? Really, really *liked* her? He was just saying that, right?

"I do trust you," she whispered.

"Well, I'm glad to hear it but I can't be worrying about you hurting yourself so do you promise not to?" said Hopper gravely.

Tina looked at him.

"Tine do you *promise*," said Hopper firmly, shaking her shoulders a little.

"Promise," she whispered.

"Kay, then."

Hopper got into the bed with Tina, still in his uniform, and put his arms around her protectively.

"Hopper, what are you doing?" she asked, panicked.

"Making sure you don't escape," he chuckled. "And giving you a cuddle."



Tina politely accepted her cuddle.

"Very forward of you," she muttered, with something of a return to her usual manner.

Hopper laughed.

"Tina, we'll sort things out," he said. "We'll get you a new life, a new identity. Let's pretend Tina *did* jump."

Tina didn't agree.

"No, I like the Tina thing," she said quietly, wondering when Hopper was planning to let go of her. "Let's say that 'Auntie' jumped instead."

Hopper looked at Tina. Yeah, he could live with that.

"Deal," he said confidently. "Promise."

In the days that followed Tina's suicide attempt, Hopper watched her like a *hawk*. He knew she was unhappy, seriously unhappy but as time went on, it became clear that Tina's promise was one that she was planning to keep.

"Tina," he said one day. "I'm seriously proud of you, you know that right?"

She shrugged and looked down, though Hopper thought that he might just have seen the shadow of a smile on her lips.

He could have cried with relief.

She was going to be okay.

El, on the other hand was not too impressed that this ... *Tina* was here to stay although she had developed a strange fascination with the woman who was more like herself than anyone she'd ever met. After a week of the girl's rigid suspicion, Tina woke to find a plate of Eggos drenched in much too much syrup sitting on her bedside table and knew that she had been grudgingly accepted by El. Tina she was Hopper's *friend*, after all. And she was sorry. And sorry was a concept that El took very seriously.

After being forgiven, Tina perked up considerably. And she was ready to talk.

## 10. Storytime

### Chapter 10

"So....how does it work, the shifting?" asked Hopper.

"It's difficult," said Tina. "And it takes practice. I need to take time to....learn a person before I can change into them."

Hopper requested elaboration with a raise of his eyebrows.

"I don't know whether it's related to my ability..." Tina said. "But I've always had a gift for reading people, for...*noticing* things about them. Shifting is a *physical* ability, but a great deal of it takes place in the mind."

"How did you...how did you get that tattoo?" asked Hopper tactfully.

Tina sighed.

"I was born in East Germany, in a lab, as part of a Soviet defence programme."

Hopper took in a sharp breath. He felt a stab of *fury*.

"There were a few of us... but I was always the best student."

Tina looked very distant.

"I suppose I wanted to develop what I could do...a bit like a kid with a talent for math would enjoy number puzzles. Anyway, as time went on it got harsher, as relations with the US worsened and war started to seem more likely."

Tina looked down and started playing with the hem of her skirt.

"It was at this point," she said quietly. "That I decided to escape. I knew that there was more to the world than just the lab, they'd let me outside a few times. Little did I know that they did this on purpose."

Tina's voice became robotic. She didn't do emotions very well.

"They wanted me to attempt escape because that would push my abilities to a higher level."

She laughed darkly.

"I suppose you could call it self-motivation. And it worked. I practiced and practiced, in secret, I...didn't want them to know how good I was getting. And one day I changed into a guard, stole a uniform and left. I was so nearly free...I was at the front gate...but my Papa was standing there, waiting."

Tina sounded hollow and Hopper's heart ached for her.

"After that point I refused to shift. For anyone. So their...persuasion got more and more...*inventive*. I was *desperate*. So desperate that I started clawing at the walls of my room. However, to my astonishment, they fell away to...*tar* under my fingertips and I walked back into my room but it was...*wrong*, like a mirror image and so cold and dirty and the air made my lungs ache. It was full of ash."

"The upside-down," whispered El.

Tina nodded.

"I thought it was a dream," she said, as if she *were* dreaming. "So I walked outside. There wasn't a soul in sight so I ran and ran until I *collapsed*."

Subject Fourteen took a breath.

"When I woke," she said quietly, meeting Hopper's gaze. "I expected to find myself back in my cell but instead I was in an alleyway in the real world. I was bewildered but I knew I had to run because they would be following me but how the hell could they find me? I could be *anyone*."

Her eyes looked glazed with the pain of the memories. Hopper gently took her hand.

"Eventually," Tina sighed. "I knew I had to *do* something...that there

was something I could do, so I began to follow someone. He was different to everyone else because he spoke words that I didn't understand. I followed and with my ability I was able to learn his language quickly, his clothes, the way he spoke, moved and when he went to catch his plane home, I stole his ticket and passport and came to the US."

Hopper looked stunned.

"What?" laughed Tina. "Doesn't it sound far-fetched enough to be true?"

Hopper still looked troubled.

"So you were *how* old when you got on that plane?" he choked.

Tina laughed mirthlessly at the coincidence.

"Fourteen," she said flatly.

"Christ," said the empathic Hopper.

He rubbed his palm over his face. He just needed a moment.

"But Tina, why?" he implored. "*Why* did you hurt El and those other kids? When you..."

He flailed his arms as words failed him.

"Hopper," Tina whispered. "Has *your* country ever lost a war?"

She let the question hang in the air.

"Look," she said at last. "I know someone who can get me a new identity...and El but I'll need *you* to get in contact with him. Do you trust me enough to do that? I would understand if you didn't."

Hopper looked at Tina. He shouldn't trust her. He shouldn't but....Oh Goddamn it!

"Okay Tina," he said warningly. "But we take this carefully. I don't want any of your CIA buddies up my ass."

She nodded and then smiled.

"Promise."

## 11. A Valentine

### Chapter 11

Six months later.

"So..." said Callahan slyly, leaning over Hopper's desk. "You and the new Polish woman, huh?"

He gestured over to the new Police Receptionist.

"*Val-en-tina*," he said slowly, miming kisses in the air.

"She's East-German," said Hopper impatiently. "And what in the hell are you talking about?"

"Well, Powell told me you invited her around to your place for Christmas," Callahan burst out gleefully, waggling his eyebrows.

"Okay, first," said Hopper sternly. "She said she had to think about it, and second she has a kid so I don't know what you expect we're going to do, and *third* it's only because she's new here. She doesn't have any family in the country and I just thought it might be nice for her to have some company."

"Hey, if she really said she has to think about it, it's a date," sniggered Callahan.

Powell leaned over eagerly.

"Yeah, and maybe by next Christmas you might have a little family of your own."

"A three-month-old baby together," Callahan guffawed.

"Shut up!" said Hopper, though he was smiling. "That's my business. Besides, she already has a kid."

He felt the need to repeat this.

"The little spindly one?" asked Powell. "Yeah, I've seen her around."

"Well," said Callahan. "Good on you man."

He clapped Hopper on the shoulder.

"Just make sure she doesn't turn into a monster," he said with a wink.

Hopper smiled.

"Oh, I will."

Things had gone well for Tina. After a long...and rather painful... discussion (during which time it was very fortunate that Tina could heal) it had been agreed that El could pose as Tina's daughter and use the excuse of homeschooling owing to language barrier as the reason why El didn't yet attend the middle school.

*Tina's* compromise was taking on an appearance more like El's so she now had brown hair and a snub nose in a rather unremarkable face. She only showed any of her real self when it was just her and Hopper alone, when she'd let her natural blue eyes replace the brown ones.

She wore the blue quite frequently actually.

Because, despite all, spending time with Tina made Hopper really happy.

"Guten Morgen," said Hopper, handing Tina a cup of coffee at the breakfast table in the cabin.

She was one of the more...enthusiastic of people at seven thirty in the morning.

"Guten Morgen," she replied much more convincingly since she *had* actually grown up in Germany.

She smiled at Hopper, giving him the encouragement he needed.

"So Tina," he said, awkwardly. "I was wondering if you wanted to go see a movie tonight, you could bring El."

"If you're sure she *wants* to," said Tina fugitively.



"It's time she got out and about," said Hopper. "Besides, nobody from the lab will be expecting to see El with a mother."

"It's too risky!" hissed Tina, the realist. "*I* would have recognised her!"

Hopper looked down, maybe she was right.

"Well...in that case I'll rent a movie," he suggested hopefully. "Sound good?"

Tina nodded with a smile.

"Remember to buy popcorn," she said. "Or Elise will go nuts."

Hopper felt a smile stretch across *his* face as their eyes locked. It was time.

"Hey, Tina..." he began slowly. "I've...I've been wanting to tell you for a while that-"

**"HOPPER!"**

The spell was efficiently broken as Joyce rushed, unannounced into the cabin.

"Hopper! Hopper!" she called frantically.

"In here Joyce!" called Hopper, reluctantly breaking his eye-contact.

Joyce sprinted into the kitchen.

She stopped dead when she saw Tina.

"What is *she* doing here?" asked Joyce, eyes widening in...whatever emotion Joyce was feeling (it was often hard to exactly pinpoint).

"I *live* here," said Tina calmly, though with an edge of contempt.

Both women had rather a hard time with each other.

"Well," said Joyce loftily, though shaking slightly. "That's...that's true. Hopper, c-can...can we have a talk?"

"Sure," said Hopper in his characteristically calm manner seeing that this clearly wasn't an emergency.

"Ou-outside if you wouldn't mind," she said, flicking her eyes suggestively towards Tina.

"Whatever you want to say you can say in front of Tina," he said, slightly defensively.

"F-fine!" snapped Joyce. "I've seen *two* of the Hawkins lab vans drive past the store this morning and I want you to keep Tina home today so she doesn't rat us out."

She folded her arms.

"Joyce," began Tina in her new accent. "That would not be a particularly smart thing for me to do. Besides, I don't want any harm to come to Hopper and El."

"Huh!" said Joyce, starting to argue as El appeared characteristically silently around the doorway. "Really?"

"Joyce," said Hopper hollowly. "If you heard the things that Tina has told me I..."

Hopper shook his head and looked away. He felt strangely tearful.

"Oh, yeah," burst Joyce with her face screwed up, waving her arms wildly. "Because that's all *bound* to be true. Christ, Hopper, she's manipulating you!"

"Well, founded or not I trust her," said Hopper firmly. "And I don't think that-"

"Just because you want to *sleep* with her!" screamed Joyce.

Eleven looked puzzled.

"Sleep with?" she replied with a furrowed brow.

"Don't worry about that honey," said Hopper darkly slowly bringing an accusing gaze to Joyce. "Joyce was just being *inappropriate*."

Hopper *glared* at her.

"Joyce," he said, gesturing for her to follow him outside as Eleven stared. "A word?"

He led her into the living room.

"Look Joyce," Hopper hissed. "We had our shot, okay? We had our shot at age *seventeen* but it didn't work out. Now, you're happy with Bob so I don't see why *I* shouldn't be allowed to be happy too."

"But with...with a *murderer*?" pleaded Joyce. "*Hopper!*"

"*I know! Joyce! Please!*" said Hopper, teeth gritted in frustration.

"But that doesn't matter?" flapped Joyce. "Because she can shift into a monster. And that's cute?"

"Joyce, she's sick," said Hopper defensively. "She's sick in her head because she grew up in a lab. But, if *anyone* can help our kids, it's *her*."

"And if anyone can help her it's *you*?" asked Joyce scathingly.

"Yeah!" said Hopper boldly. "Maybe I *can*."

## 12. The Boy Who Knew

### Notes:

Thank you LunaRose2468 for your review!

### Chapter 12

It was the evening before Christmas Eve when Joyce could bring herself to speak to Hopper again. Hopper had just managed to smoothly drape his arm over Tina's shoulders when the phone rang. Grumbling, he answered it, then moments later, Hopper, Tina and El were in the car.

Will was in trouble.

The boy sat, frozen, in his living room, staring at something the others couldn't see.

"Will!" cried Joyce shrilly, shaking him furiously. "Will! Wake up! Oh my *boy!*"

"Joyce," said Tina urgently. "Let *me* talk to him. I can *help* him."

"No," she said firmly. "You are not coming *near* my son!"

"Joyce *please*," begged Hopper, before Tina barged the concerned mother out of the way.

Tina crouched down next to the stunned-looking Will.

"Will," she said. "What do you see? Is *he* there?"

Is *he* there? That was a weird question to ask. Joyce and Hoper exchanged a glance.

"He-he is," stammered Will, hearing Tina.

"The sky monster?" asked Tina.

"Yes," Will whispered, eyes wide with terror.

"What does he *want*?" she pressed.

"He wants..." Will shivered. "He wants *me*."

Joyce gasped and lunged for the pair of them but Tina motioned to Hopper to restrain her.

"So he knows you're there?" asked Tina gently.

"Yes..." breathed Will. "And he knows you're gone. He...he's outside."

"Stay very still," commanded Tina, with Will's clammy hand clasped in her own. "Deep breaths, I'm coming to get you."

Without an explanation, Tina rushed to the wall and started scrabbling at the paper. Under her fingers, the wall began to ooze with darkness and she pulled herself through.

She pushed through the creeper-like tendrils to arrive out of Will's wall in the upside down. It was just her and Will now.

"Will" she whispered. "I'm here."

He was trembling.

Tina turned to look out of the window. The falling snow outside the Byers family's windows had turned to ash.

Tina felt surprisingly at-ease in this hell, well it had been her home for half a year, she supposed and at one point her escape.

She could feel that the monster was nearby, just like Will could.

"Will," she said seriously. "I'm going to make you wake up, then you'll be back home, okay? But you have to *trust me*."

Will nodded, dumbstruck, though he started fighting as Tina clamped her hand over his nose and mouth, suffocating him.

On his kitchen floor, Joyce was at a loss as to what to do. Her son was writhing and straining for apparently no reason.

"Will! WILL!" she screeched, grappling with his skinny wrists. "What

is she *doing* to him?"

He jerked awake, gasping for air

"Where's Tina!" he gasped. "Where is she?"

In reply, the wall began to bleed filth and a hand appeared flaggingly through it. Hopper darted forward and tugged Tina through the wall, folding her into a big hug.

"Holy shit" exclaimed Jonathan, dashing over to examine the wall which was now...just a wall.

All of them were breathing heavily, most of all Will who was still *panting*.

"You okay, bud?" asked Hopper.

Will nodded. He was one tough kid.

"Will," asked Tina. "How long has this been going on for? These... journeys to the upside-down?"

"Since I was there last year," he replied quietly, confirming Tina's suspicion.

Tina rocked back on her heels thinking.

"So, five people were taken ... no *six*, including me. And the others apart from us were taken by the Demagorgon to be fed upon. But when *I* went to the upside down, it just...well it just sort of *dumped* me there...*Delivered* me, almost, then went back to the school. What happened when it got *you* Will?"

"I...I was just in the upside down," he mumbled, training his solemn brown eyes on Tina. "In this house. And the Demagorgon was gone."

"And it didn't try to *eat* you?" she asked, in interrogator mode.

Will shook his head.

"So only Will and I survived, because we weren't eaten...." mused

Tina. "Which makes you wonder...Perhaps there's something in the upside down that's fascinated by those with special abilities too. A... Demagorgon Hawkins lab, if you like..."

Tina and Hopper shared a look.

"Will," began Hopper. "The night in the summer when I came round, the night I saw Tina as the Deamgorgon you *knew* about her, didn't you?"

Will looked puzzled.

"I...I guess, but I didn't see her I just..."

"Just knew," finished Jonathan who had always noticed his brother's uncanny observantness.

"Joyce," said Tina. "May I see some of Will's drawings?"

Joyce dithered but, unable to resist the urge to show off, went to fetch some of Will's art.

She handed a stack to Tina.

Tina selected one, drawn when Will was seven. It looked almost like...

"Will, who is this person?" she said.

Will shrugged.

"Just a person," he replied meekly.

Tina held the picture up against Eleven.

"Not El?" she asked, inclining her head,

Joyce snatched the picture.

"No!" she said frantically. "No, No! That's not *possible*! This was- this was *years* ago! How in the hell?"

"How indeed..." said Tina quietly.

She considered Will this time in her professional capacity. The Number Twelve that never was.

"Joyce..." began Hopper slowly. "Will may have....I think he may have extra abilities, like El and Tina."

Joyce gave a kind of strangled squeak and then engulfed Will roughly into a boa constrictor's hug, rocking him back and forth.

"Will! Oh *Will!*"



## 13. Lies, Lies, Lies

### Chapter 13

"So..." asked El. "Will is like me?"

"Yes," said Tina. "He is."

"Do you want to hurt him?" she asked Tina seriously.

Tina felt a snarl of shame in her stomach.

"No, and I didn't want to hurt you," she answered quietly. "But we were...we were led to believe that it was necessary."

"Necessary?" asked Hopper, realising that he might now get to hear the reason for El's imprisonment.

Tina looked at the gathered faces. They wouldn't let this go.

"So..." sighed Tina heavily. "You were told that El opened the doorway to the upside-down by accident, correct?"

They nodded.

"Well that's true...as far as the *scientists* were concerned. They only needed to know how the experiments were done. The *supervisors*, including Brenner and myself, knew *why*. We were actually hoping that El *would* open the doorway because it had happened before."

She took as deep breath as she saw five faces digesting this information with varying ease.

"A few years ago," she sighed. "In a *Siberian* facility, a doorway was opened to the same dimension by a young boy with similar abilities as El. He could... swap things...with his mind. As in he could look at your coffee mug and fill it with whiskey while some guy at the bar didn't think he was drunk enough to order coffee by accident."

Hopper raised his eyebrows but said nothing.

"We were told," continued Tina, feeling judgement upon her. "That in this place, the Soviets had found *extremely* advanced weaponry, and of course we wanted in. However, our agent had been compromised and he lied to us, whether under pressure or not we never knew since nobody has seen or heard from him since."

She looked out of the window with a faraway expression on her face.

"The Soviets," Tina said darkly. "Wanted us to open the doorway because then they could use it as a kind of tunnel into the US. They already had it set up at there end, and were, if you like, already *in* the tunnel but they needed us to set it up at our end...and we did."

Tina looked pained.

"The doorway provides access and a kind of shortcut between the two nations because distances aren't always proportional. So in theory, an army could march three steps from Moscow, given the right conditions, and end up in Hawkins."

"Question," said Hopper, sticking up his hand. "If the Russians could cross the border into the US, couldn't we do the same to them?"

"We don't think so," said Tina flatly. "It seems that the Soviets have a much greater understanding of the dimension and they alone have the know-how to shorten the distance. The only way *we* could cross over is to do it at exactly the same time as them. However with Will's...intuition..."

She shook her head to clear it.

"The *other* dimension that can be reached is the sub-dimension before the upside-down. It's the place that El can go when she finds people and it's where I go when I want to...I guess learn a face so I can change my own into it."

"The Dark," said El quietly.

"Yes," said Tina. "And this is the *useful* dimension, just everyone has kind of managed to... *overshoot* that a little so we have this problem."

"Will?" asked El quietly. "Can you go to the Dark?"

"Can you sweetheart?" asked Joyce.

Will shook his head, unsure.

Jonathan looked troubled.

"So...my brother...he can see the future?" he asked Tina.

"No, I *believe* he just has a sense of things,' she said with professional detachment. "He's more in-tune with...well with the *world*, if you like...and with the upside-down..."

Tina began to look excited.

"...And now we have Will, we would be able to-"

Hopper shook his head and Tina looked slightly abashed.

"No!" snarled Joyce. "You will *never* take my son!"

"No, I won't," said Tina calmly. "I'm just saying that *if* the time comes, Will may have some terrific opportunities in life, those that others don't have."

"How?" asked Jonathan, looking slightly accusing.

How indeed?

"Joyce," said Tina quietly. "I have to ask...did you take any kind of hallucinogenic drugs shortly before or during your pregnancy with Will? So any LSD...Magic mushrooms..."

"Wha-wha?" spluttered Joyce. "No! Of course not! Why would I...?"

Tina held her hands up in surrender.

"How about Will's father?" she pressed. "Did *he* use drugs?"

Joyce frantically mouthed and gestured silently. Hopper could sense another bout of hysterics coming on.

"Will?" Tina turned to the boy, locked in his mother's arms. "How about you? Do *you* know?"

He shook his head.

"Will," she repeated harshly. "Do you *Know*?"

He closed his eyes tight and exhaled slowly. He was *Thinking*.

His eyes snapped open.

"Yes," he gasped.

At almost the same moment, the front door slammed shut. They didn't need Will's gift to know where Jonathan was off to.

"Aw shit!" swore Hopper, racing for the door as Jonathan's car started. "He's gone to kick his dad's head in!"

And so he had.

## 14. Good Cop, Bad Cop

### Chapter 14

"C'mon, c'mon, c'mon," muttered Hopper. "Pull over, kid!"

He sped behind Jonathan with his lights flashing on the road to Indianapolis.

"Byers," he warned under his breath. "Don't be a dumb-ass!"

He knew that Jonathan was upset, but a car chase was not something that anyone needed. Not tonight. Perhaps Will had known it would happen. Perhaps he could see them right now. Perhaps he was having another episode right that minute.

Jesus, Hopper was *not* in the mood for this.

"Jonathan," crackled Hopper, using the loudspeaker on the cruiser. "Pull over, your brother could be in trouble still and neither of us can help him if we're driving to the city."

Jonathan kept driving the car, and anger kept driving *him*.

"Jonathan," sighed Hopper heavily.

Something in the chief's tone got through to Jonathan. In a way, Hopper was more of a father to him than the man who had cursed Will to the Upside-Down.

He pulled over, to Hopper's relief.

The chief got out of his truck and waited as Jonathan eased himself, shaking, out of the driver's seat of his own vehicle.

"Jonathan," said Hopper, holding out his hands. "Thank you."

The teenager just stared. The explosion was coming. It was coming in five, four, three, two-

"THIS IS SO SCREWED UP!" yelled Jonathan, storming towards

Hopper. "My brother has superpowers and your Demogorgon *girlfriend* wants to use him to kill Commies to get back at them for doing the exact same to her! Where does it stop Hopper? Huh? WHERE DOES IT STOP?"

"Jonathan," said Hopper carefully. "You have. To calm. Down."

Jonathan threw his arms up. He couldn't...he couldn't deal with this. Partly because Will was in so much danger but partly because...because it was *Will*. It was always Will...not ...*him*.

He felt sick that he could be jealous of his own brother. A brother whom he loved so much and suffered so *severely*. But plain old Jonathan Byers, who had, at a push, *one* friend, had room in his heart for love and jealousy at the same time. Big kids needed attention too.

"Look," continued Hopper. "Your dad's a dick. I know. He had been from the *minute* he started Kindergarten, I remember. But going after him is gonna get you arrested. Understand?"

Jonathan wouldn't meet his eye.

"Jonathan!" cried Hopper. "Do you *understand*?"

Reluctantly the boy nodded and slumped down hopelessly on the hood of his car.

"I'm just so worried," he choked. "And so angry that my dad did this to Will! To *all* of us!"

"I know," said Hopper, taking a seat next to him as it started to snow again.

He put his hat back on.

"But think," he continued. "If Will wasn't special he would have been eaten, just like Barbara and we'd have lost him."

"Yeah," sniffed Jonathan, wiping his nose unattractively across his sleeve. "I guess."

"That's my man," said Hopper, slapping Jonathan on the shoulder. "Now, let's get home to your Mom. It's not going to be pretty."

"Yeah," laughed Jonathan. "You got that right."

Jonathan followed the police cruiser home. And yes, Hopper's prediction *had* been correct.

"Jonathan! Oh God *Jonathan!*" cried Joyce, barrelling towards her son.

She hugged him then pulled his face to look at hers.

"You *ever* do that again..." she choked, shaking her head.

Tina emerged on the front porch with her arms folded. She looked as though her patience had just had a workout. Honestly, Hopper couldn't fathom *why* the two women disliked each other so much.

"Jim," she called. "Is everything alright?"

"Yeah," he shouted back.

Tina retreated into the house to relay the news. Hopper watched her go intently.

"Hopper!" hissed Joyce. "Were you even listening to me?"

"Huh? Wha...?" he replied, dazed, effectively answering her question.

She tutted in annoyance.

"I *said*, do you want to be taking Eleven home? It's late."

Hopper checked his watch.

"Sure, yeah, you're right," he said absently, twirling his hat.

Joyce looked at him with concern.

"Hopper, you could stay the night here if you wanted."

Hopper barely stopped himself from making the joke he wanted to

make but it wouldn't have been appropriate in front of her son.

"Nahhh," he said. "That's alright, the snow really isn't too heavy."

Joyce looked concerned as Hopper gently helped El and Tina into the cruiser. She took him aside.

"Hopper," she said quietly. "Will...What...? What do I do?"

Hopper sighed.

"Joyce, he's a special kid," he said. "We've always known that and he's still the same Will that woke up this morning and we shouldn't treat him any differently."

Joyce bit her lip nervously and nodded.

"And Hopper," she said. "I don't trust Tina."

"Joyce..." he began wearily.

"I know, Hopper," she interrupted. "I know *you* trust her and I know that nothing that *I* say or do can dissuade you so just watch to see if she does anything suspicious."

Hopper sighed.

"I will do Joyce. Will do."

Looking back, perhaps he really should have...



## 15. The Wolf Amongst the Sheep

### Notes

I'm so sorry this hasn't been updated in weeks, I've just been busy.

Hope you like it, anyhow.

### Chapter 15

It was everywhere. The *thing*. It wrapped it's hands around the Upside-Down and its fingers pierced the fragile film between that hell and Hawkins. It dug into the soil. Burrowed.

The police force had no idea why the crops were dying, but with every phone call that Tina took, she became more sure of what was going on. Finally, *he* was here. She had to do something.

After her time in the upside-down, she couldn't *not* know what was in store for the world, she just hadn't thought that it would happen so *quickly*.

It was Will, El and herself, Tina decided. *They* were the forces that were helping the thing grow here. They were the beings between the realms, not really belonging in either world.

She hadn't told Hopper about the monster. He didn't need to worry. And Joyce Byers *certainly* didn't need to be told. But this couldn't continue...

"Tina!" called Hopper, making her jump out of her thoughts. "You want a lift home?"

"Er, sure," she said, as if she even had to *think* about it. "Thank you."

Hopper led her out to his cruiser from the doors of the Police Station and opened the door for her.

"What a gentleman!" she giggled, not complaining as Hopper brushed her arm on purpose on the way past.

"So Tina," said Hopper slowly as the bleak January landscape flashed past them. "I'm going to take you home and you can just chill there while Joyce and I take Will to his appointment at the lab. Eleven and Jonathan are out, but safe."

"You *really* won't tell me where they are? You don't trust me?" Tina asked incredulously. "Just because of *Joyce*?"

Hopper flushed a little.

"No, that's not true," he said with a nervous chuckle.

Tina raised a brown eyebrow.

"Okay then," said Hopper. "Yeah, and they're at the Wheelers'."

"Good to know," said Tina, filing that piece of information away for future use. "I feel like Valentina Schneider ought to know where her own kid is."

"Nah," replied Hopper. "She's European, they like that sort of thing."

They both laughed. It was a magical moment. *So* magical. And Joyce didn't manage to ruin it.

"So..." said Hopper cautiously, as he cut the engine outside the cabin. "Tina since we...since we have the house to ourselves until tomorrow, I was wondering..."

Hopper scratched the back of his neck awkwardly.

"...Y'know...if you'd...if you'd like to make an evening of it."

Tina turned to Hopper, surprised, not by his boldness but by his timing. Then she realised that it was only herself who knew the world was ending. Besides, maybe in times like these it was best not to let things stew.

"Sure," she said with a shy smile. "But you better make this damn appointment quick."

Hopper grinned, relieved, thinking her comment was out of eagerness

rather than the need to know how long she'd have to exact her plan.

"I'm afraid it may be a few hours long," he said, brain struggling to think about timings when it was lavishly planning his romantic Friday night. "So let's say... We'll crack the champagne open at eight thirty?"

Tina beamed at him. Nearly five hours. That was more than enough time, if everything went smoothly.

"I can't wait," she whispered silkily, summer-sky eyes shining, getting closer...*closer*...

## 16. Doctorwho?

"Will," said Dr Sam Owens.

He was the new lead scientist at Hawkins lab, and really, he seemed okay. Better than Brenner anyway. He had been one *seriously* sinister motherfu-

"This is Dr Scott, he's going to ask you a few questions," he continued, breaking off Hoper's thoughts.

"Scott?" asked Will quietly. "Like Star Trek?"

Dr Scott laughed kindly.

"I wish!"

Dr Scott sat down next to Will's hospital bed, careful not to disturb any of the monitors.

"So Will, your Mom tells us you've been having some nightmares," he said, as a prompt.

Will looked quizzically at Hopper and his mother, wondering what he was allowed to say.

"Er...yeah, a few," he mumbled.

"And your diagnosis is PTSD, is that correct?" asked the doctor, gesturing to the boy's brimming medical record.

The boy nodded.

"What if I were to..." began the doctor. "...Open up the possibility that perhaps what you might be seeing is true?"

Hopper looked alarmed.

"I don't think so, doctor," he said quickly, worried about where, in light of their recent discovery about Will, this could be going. "As we were told, it's PTSD. The symptoms fit."

Scott turned to Hopper.

"Officer, the fact that Will is here in the first place, I think demonstrates that anything is possible."

Hopper looked at the scientist with loathing.

"Chief Hopper," Scott said, in the same infuriating tone, seeing that he was going to be met with resistance. "We are going to have to work together on this one, okay? That means we tell each other the truth. And the truth is that you don't believe this boy has any disorder stemming from his experience last year."

Hopper threw his hands up.

"I don't know doc, frankly I don't even know what this PTSD is even meant to be."

"Okay," Scott said smoothly. "So in that case I'd appreciate it if you'd let me do my examination."

Joyce looked, wide-eyed, between the two men, waiting for Hopper to get violent. That really was an unfortunate trait of his.

However, Hopper just smiled stiffly and let the doctor take over. Now wasn't the time to upset these people.

"Will," said the doctor. "Who am I?"

Will knew he was Dr Scott, he'd just been told so but his mind somehow rebelled against the idea. He shook his head.

"Um...Dr...Scott."

Having secretly proven his point to Dr Owens, Dr Scott turned slowly to Joyce.

"Mrs Byers," the doctor said slowly. "Owning to the results of out examinations, I'm afraid we're going to have to detain your son for his own safety."

It took a moment for that to sink in.

"Wha....? What? How? No! THAT'S MY SON!" Joyce cried, rushing to shield her child. "You can't take him!"

Dr Scott was completely un-moved by this show of protectiveness.

"Mrs Byers, please calm down!" he commanded. "I don't mean right this second or before we've all had a good talk about this."

Joyce was howling. The sound put Scott's teeth on edge. Will started to cry.

"Excuse me, doctor," snarled Hopper, taking the doctor's arm roughly. "I think we need to have a talk. Outside."

Scott nodded to Owens. This would be okay.

Hopper slammed Scott against the wall outside.

"What the hell is this?" he spat angrily. "You can't take away her child! We are American Citizens with rights."

Scott looked at Hopper with a strange haughtiness.

"We can do, whatever we damn please, because soon there will not *be* a United States of America if we don't act."

"You mean the Russians?" shot Hopper.

The doctor shook his head sadly.

"No, we have a somewhat more...pressing threat."

"Oh yeah?" challenged Hopper aggressively.

"Yeah," replied the doctor calmly. "The upside-down is trying to work it's way into our world. And it's working. Notice how all the crops are dying?"

Hopper let go of the man with a huff.

"Shit," he breathed.

"Shit indeed," replied the doctor. "So, in order that the monster

doesn't get its hands on Will Byers, whom he could use to great effect, we need to keep him safe here."

Hopper snorted incredulously.

"Yeah, right. As *if* I'm going to let you do that. I know what you people like to do to kids."

The doctor thought for a moment.

"I know it would be a big step..." he said in a calmly rehearsed. "But his mother could live here temporarily with him at first...and we could arrange tutors so that he wouldn't fall behind with his education."

Hopper looked like he was about to punch Dr Scott. Scott realised this too.

"Tell you what," he said quickly. "We'll come and fetch him in a few days, just so everyone can get used to the idea, how's that sound?"

Scott knew there was no way in hell that Hopper would let that happen, so he didn't buy his "sure, we'll think about it" for a moment.

But the seed had been planted and Tina felt satisfied as she relaxed and let Dr Scott's body morph back into her own.

Dr Owens looked up as she entered.

"Marge," he said seriously, having been shocked to have his previous, and officially deceased, boss turn up at the lab an hour earlier with one hell of a story. "What in the *hell* did that achieve?"

Tina's face was blank.

"It's Tina now," she said blandly.

Owens snorted in disbelief.

"Like Fourteen?" he asked. "Great."

Until Hopper, Sam Owens had been the only person who knew Tina's

secret.

"And you tell me what it achieved? Would you have known I wasn't Scott?"

Dr Owens shook his head. No, he wouldn't. Tina's impersonation had been impeccable.

"And you saw how the child hesitated? He knew it wasn't Scott, though he'd never met him."

"Ma-Tina," said Owens. "Yes, that is true, but if he's what you claim..."

Tina shrugged allowing Owens to finish his sentence in his head.

"The solution or the downfall," she said. "We need him. whichever way this goes."

She was CIA again.

"Now," she continued briskly, blonde hair glinting under the fluorescent lights. "He will move the child from his home, and while they are hiding...perhaps he wanders into the woods."

Tina looked at Owens pointedly. She was dead as far as the CIA was concerned so she'd have to work through him. Besides, she had a new role to play.

Dr Owens looked troubled for a moment.

"Sam," said Tina gravely. "It is the *only* way."

With a tight sigh, he gave her a sharp nod and pressed a radio transmitter into her hand.

She smiled.

"I'll be sure to keep you in the loop," she said. "And keep them at the lab a little longer. I need to be home when Hopper gets back."

After a quick exit from the lab, Hopper led the stunned Will and the



hysterical Joyce into the car.

"Hopper," she whispered desperately. "They can't take Will! They'll... They'll..."

Her face crumpled.

"My boy...with his head shaved...locked in a prison!" she choked. "*You can't let them!*"

"I agree," said Hopper, without a moment's hesitation. "I agree."

When the exhausted Hopper got home, it was only the sight of Tina waiting for him with a two plates of delicious food that made the enormity of what he was about to do bearable.

"Hopper," she whispered quietly.

Hah! Wasn't she intuitive?

"What's wrong?" she probed,

Hopper pulled Tina into a hug and let her hands rub his shoulders.

"Tina," he whispered into her brown hair. "We have to go. Now."

Tina drew away from him.

"Is this about Will?" she asked with professional dishonesty.

Hopper nodded.

"We have to get out of the county," he muttered to her. "The *state*, even. They're going to be looking for us. You wouldn't...you wouldn't have to come with us. Not if you didn't want."

Hopper looked at Tina with such pain, and such *love*. Most other people would definitely feel a stab of guilt at betraying someone as good as this. Even Tina felt a prickle of discomfort, but pushed it aside.

"I want to go with you," she said, truthfully, then even more truthfully. "*I want you.*"

Hopper looked into her beautiful eyes and needed only a few tugs of encouragement before he wholeheartedly agreed with her.

Later, with the exhausted Hopper's dinner re-warming in the microwave and Tina in the shower, Hopper paused only for the briefest of moments why Tina had kept her eyes brown that evening.